

# Murray fails to pick new president

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Murray State University regents will continue their presidential search after failing to choose from three finalists during a meeting that ended early Saturday.

The lack of consensus means the search for a new president at the western Kentucky campus will likely stretch into the fall semester, Board of Regents Chairman Don Sparks said in a telephone interview Saturday.

"It's kind of a letdown," Sparks said. "I think everybody had hoped we'd be able to come up with a candidate."

The finalists were MSU associate provost Tim Todd, University of Houston-Victoria President Tim Hudson and Randy Dunn, Illinois state superintendent of schools. Each candidate spent a day on the Murray campus last week.

"Each one had support on the board, but we wanted either unanimous or near-unanimous support," Sparks said. "We weren't able to get that."

The 11-member board reviewed the finalists in a meeting that began Friday evening and lasted until about 2:30 a.m. CDT Saturday.

"Rather than make a decision and not feel real good about it,

they felt like it might be better just to back up here and make sure," he said.

The school is looking for a successor to King Alexander, who left to become president of California State University at Long Beach.

Alexander's father, Kern, is serving as interim president. King Alexander succeeded his father as MSU president, a controversial decision at the time that later became popular as the younger Alexander won over one-time doubters.

Regents may go back to the original list of presidential candidates and ask a search firm to look for other candidates, Sparks said. The board has not eliminated

any of the finalists, he said.

Sparks said he thought the regents would probably wait until early in the fall semester, which begins in August, to bring in another round of candidates. A decision in summer would come when students and some faculty are gone from campus.

"I think people would not feel they had much input in it," he said.

Sparks said the job to lead the 10,300-student school in far western Kentucky, about 50 miles southeast of Paducah, has attracted interest from other university presidents around the country.

"That's a sign that there's some national recognition ... that it's an attractive position," he said.